

Residential Study Group
October 13, 2016
DRAFT Meeting Notes

Attendees: Michael Byrne, Inspectional Services, William Copithorne, Real Estate Industry, Wynelle Evans, Town Manager appointee, Walter Fey, ZBA, Steve McKenna, Town Manager appointee, Pasi Miettinen, Town Manager appointee, Jonathan Nyberg, Development and Construction Industry, Elizabeth Pyle, Town Manager appointee, Jennifer Raitt, Planning and Community Development, Planning and Rick Varella, Inspectional Services.

Jenny welcomed the group to the meeting. The group made introductions. The group reviewed the meeting summary from the 9/28 RSG Meeting and voted to approve them.

The group then discussed the potential for amended zoning to encourage energy retrofits. Jenny said that she received an email from Christian Klein from the ZBA encouraging us to have this discussion. The group agreed to discuss it. Liz explained that we could not use 40A as a tool to make energy efficiency, because zoning cannot restrict interior living spaces. Jenny explained that it would not be a restriction, but rather an incentive which is allowed under 40A Section 9.

Mike explained that a School St residence is a LEED NC Home. He explained how thick the walls were. He believes that zero energy homes will become more prominent in the future. Wynelle encouraged the group to go to www.nowcommunities.com – the company created the Riverwalk development in Concord and Emerson Green in Devens. Emerson Green has homes that are all 1,900 sq. ft. and for-sale for under \$500,000. The group agreed that those are important points: affordability and how the energy efficient home fits into the community. Pasi suggested that we talk with a director at the Department of Energy Resources who lives in Arlington. Jenny suggested inviting him to a future meeting.

The group then continued the discussion from 9/28 about group priorities. From the 9/28 meeting minutes, the group focused on the following priority issues:

- Address building setbacks - Homes on same street should align rather than averages in current ZBL.
- Address potential development on irregular lots. (How many of these remain?)
- Parking, driveways and streetscape. (What did the engineering report state about appropriate grade changes?)
- Consider any fiscal impacts – taxes / revenue of new housing
- Noise from trucks and machinery
- Building heights - a 2 ½ story home looks larger (Should building heights be set by district?)
- Lot coverage of replacement housing
- Special permit / variance process (Review of proposed projects and research on hearings / types process, and stated need for expansion. ZBA – hearing for additions 750ft – increase to streamline process.

The group then agreed that they would divide up the list of priorities into smaller study teams. Jonathan and Steve agreed to study building heights. Pasi agreed to focus on massing and lot coverage. Liz will continue research on driveways; she also provided Jenny with some preliminary research on driveway slopes. The research includes information about Reading, Cambridge, and Pittsfield. Walt will focus on the ZBA's permitting and variance process. Jenny, Mike, and Rick will provide assistance to the group. Wynelle will provide information from a presentation she recently pulled together. She also stated that she would distribute this to the group. There was interest in looking at the graphic depictions

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designed by Gamble and Associates provided for Speing Town Meeting and paid for by the Department of Planning and Community Development. Jenny said she would distribute these to the group.

The group then discussed the site visits and agreed to go to 96 Oakland and 52 Kensington Park. 22-28 Mott St and 9 Park St. might be good examples of height and lot coverage. Rick, Mike, Steve, and Wynelle will work with Jenny to design the itinerary and distribute materials to the group in advance of the site visit. Information about the application, inspection services calculations, and any other reports on the property will be provided to the group. The group then identified a date for the site visits: Saturday, October 22 at 9:30 a.m. beginning at 96 Oakland Ave.

Pasi stated that he was still concerned about the group's focus and believes that there is an underlying element of fear – people don't like change. Jenny stated that is why it will be important to hear what people think in the field. This led to a discussion about changes in consumer need and demand and the changing housing market, as well as changes with the community. Steve noted that many more people want to remain in Arlington. Prices are very high right now, but he believes they will begin to cool.

The group briefly discussed the Zoning Warrant Article on Rock Removal regulations. The group asked that the ARB request that the matter is referred to this RSG. We should have information about how many houses this will impact. Concern was expressed that the regulation might become too regulatory. We need to be sensitive to issues. There was also concern that limited notification has been provided to abutters and they often did not have any sense of building plans. Some new homes that are removing rock, should not need to remove rock. The group also wondered why and how the ZBA would enforce this.

The next meeting date will be October 26 at 5:45 p.m.